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Webraska and Alcatel Demonstrate New Street-Level Maps On WAP Mobile Phones Using Positioning Technology; GSM World Congress - Alcatel Stand F13

Business & Technology Editors

CANNES, France--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 2, 2000

Webraska Mobile Technologies, the world's first provider of real-time traffic information, maps and navigation on WAP mobile phones, and Alcatel demonstrate a new service that relies on positioning technology to display mobile phone users' location on a map, to provide information on facilities surrounding them and to guide them to their destination using directions and maps. This service is being demonstrated on Alcatel's stand through the HomeTop(TM) Solutions Location Server, at the GSM World Congress held in Cannes, France (2-4 February 2000).

Using advanced positioning technology developed by Alcatel and powered by the HomeTop Solutions Internet portal, the demonstration will show how mobile phone users can choose that their phone be located and then be able to visualise their position on a map and query the phone for a list of the nearest facilities, such as restaurants, hotels, parking spaces, etc depending on their preferences and profile. Once they have chosen their destination, users will be guided to it with written directions, maps indicating the full itinerary as well as section-by-section maps that change as they move towards their destination.

The demonstration will both rely on Webraska's AskAway(R) Internet platform, combining street-level digital maps, traffic and facilities information, and Alcatel's positioning technology through the HomeTop Solutions Location Server, a low-cost solution that enables locating a mobile handset subscriber without any network infrastructure change. It is based on SIM Tool Kit technology, works seamlessly with SMS or WAP, and allows an accuracy of up to 150 metres in urban zones. Mapping data for the demonstration will be provided by Tele Atlas.

"This demonstration shows the powerful combination of positioning technology such as Alcatel's and real-time mobility services such as Webraska's. We are convinced that real-time positioning, mapping and navigation will become the foundations of all mobile e-commerce applications," commented Jean-Michel Durocher, CEO and founder of Webraska.

"Proximity services are the killer app for today's mobile Internet. HomeTop and Webraska have worked together to combine the best of the Internet and mobile telephony so operators can give their customers access to local information and services - wherever they may be," added Denis Attal, Managing Director of Alcatel's HomeTop Solutions.

About Webraska Mobile Technologies

Webraska is the world's first provider of value-added real-time traffic information, maps, and navigation services on mobile internet phones, turning phones into co-pilots. Webraska's goal is to provide a flexible and complete alternative to CD-rom-based car navigation systems, using its patented Internet-based Distributed Navigation. Its customers are telecom operators wishing to reduce churn rates, earn new revenues and build a strong brand by addressing their users' basic mobility needs such as "Where am I?", "How do I get to my destination by car, public transport or on foot?", "Can you guide me safely to my destination?". Originally developed in partnership with leading French mobile telephony operator SFR, Webraska's services are built on carrier-grade quality digital map servers designed to support millions of subscribers. Services include WAP access, Java-based call-centre interfaces, XML queries for IVR systems, SMS connectivity, internet

personalisation, support and visualisation. Webraska's services are available to subscribers of SFR in France and KPN in the Netherlands. Webraska has also established partnerships with Trafficmaster in the UK, Tele Atlas, Alcatel, Phone.com and In-Fusio. The company is headquartered in Poissy, France and has offices in the UK, Belgium and Spain. It recently raised (128) 10m in venture capital from Apax and Argo Global Capital. For more information visit www.webraska.com

About HomeTop Solutions

The HomeTop software suite is a cutting-edge suite for applications enabling operators and ISPs to offer their clients Internet access from any fixed or mobile Internet terminal. Alcatel also creates customised solutions based on the HomeTop software suite.

About Alcatel

Alcatel builds next generation networks, delivering integrated end-to-end voice and data communication solutions to established and new carriers, as well as enterprises and consumers worldwide. With 120,000 employees and sales of EURO 23.1 billion (\$ 25.0 billion), Alcatel operates in more than 130 countries. For more information, visit Alcatel on Internet: <http://www.alcatel.com>

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Kermit Whitfield

Navigation systems are slowly becoming more than just novelty playthings for the affluent. After all, how much more solidly middle-class can you get than the Toyota Camry and Honda Accord, both of which have navigation options? But the price for having those clever little electronic maps built into your dash is still far too high for true volume sales to take off. Which leads us to ask: why are navigation systems so expensive and what is being done to make them cheaper? Mike Antrim, executive account manager, Mitsubishi Electric Automotive America, Inc. (MEAA; whose parent company has been making navigation systems since 1991) says most of the cost, as you might expect, is tied up in the sophisticated electronics hardware. He reckons that the navigation engine alone, which includes the high-powered microprocessor and memory modules needed to calculate routes, makes up about 40% of total system cost. The in-dash color display, which many in automotive electronics identify as still prohibitively expensive for wide-scale application, he pegs at 10-15%. Rounding out the big-hitters is the DVD unit needed for reading map discs at about 20% of overall cost. Currently, these components help to push navigation prices well above \$1000/unit, but Antrim projects that over the next five years costs for all three will drop by at least 30%, bringing system costs down to \$500/unit. "That's the price where a sales avalanche will occur," he says.

A lot of that reduction will come from the relentless improvements in the surface-mounted ASIC (Application Specific Integrated Circuit) chips, such as the decoder integrated circuits that control how map data is retrieved from DVDs (and constitute a large part of the DVD unit's cost). But some will come from greater integration and economies of scale. Right now, each OEM's nav system is largely unique, but the push is on to integrate navigation into sound system head units, which would allow suppliers to standardize components over high volumes and bring prices down.

On the software development side, cost-cutting through standardization is also becoming more prevalent. While each OEM wants a unique customer interface, they don't much care how the underlying route calculation algorithms are written, as long as they work. So, MEAA has designed a software package called "Victoria" that allows it to use the same basic calculation code across all of its customers (which include DaimlerChrysler, Volvo and Mitsubishi), while allowing each to develop unique interfaces. To help reduce development time for the OEMs, Antrim explains that Victoria is both more object-oriented and more modular than traditional packages, (it also runs on a standard Windows operating system), allowing engineers to "drag-and-drop" a lot of their code writing. Antrim estimates that Victoria can reduce development time by 67%, and that hardware and software savings combined will put built-in navigation units in "every vehicle except entry-level within 7 to 8 years."

NAV BY RADIO. If you don't want to wait that long for affordable navigation, iBiquity Digital Corp. (Columbia, MD) is currently launching an approach you might call "navigation lite." Using the spectrum space between analog radio signals, iBiquity equips local radio stations to broadcast digital signals containing real-time traffic information which is decoded by an aftermarket head unit in the vehicle. The system does without a DVD unit, a large screen or a satellite antenna, so hardware costs are kept low. In fact, according to Joe D'Angelo, vice president, data services, the only significant cost increase over a standard head unit is a proprietary digital signal decoder chipset that sells for less than \$40. Of course, iBiquity doesn't offer the amenities of a high-cost system like voice activation or turn-by-turn directions. But D'Angelo argues that the chief concern of a lot of the drivers in the 50 biggest U.S. metro areas where the service will eventually be available is avoiding congestion and backups during daily commutes; and iBiquity's 50 kilobit per station data pipeline is more than enough to broadcast the details of every traffic slowdown in a major metropolitan area. Two types of head units will be available (Delphi, Visteon and Panasonic are all building models): one with a narrow screen that will only display text messages; and one with a larger screen

that will show a color route map with congestion areas marked by warning symbols.

[ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

CELLULAR NAVIGATION. But the cheapest and fastest way to bring navigation to the multitudes may be by bypassing built-in systems altogether and working through cell phones and PDAs. Thanks in part to a federal law designed to ensure that "911" callers can be easily located, all new mobile communication devices will have built-in GPS chips that can be tracked via satellite. And while that may conjure visions of Big Brother to some, it provides the necessary prerequisite for "location-based services" like navigation. Taking advantage of this potentially huge market, Motorola has developed a Java-based software package called "Viamoto" that allows users to download real-time turn-by-turn directions to a mobile device. The Viamoto server that delivers the map data stores it in a format that optimizes access speed, so that even at the low bandwidth capacity of cellular networks, directions can be transmitted quickly. Although Motorola is a major handset maker, it designed Viamoto to work with any of its competitors' units by coding its distributed software components using the standard Internet protocols TCP/IP; UDP/IP; http and XML. Lee Callaway, director of product marketing for location solutions, says of the open architecture approach, "We want to see the mass of consumers having a navigation experience." To that end Motorola is using Viamoto to power the cell phone-based nav system dubbed "Avis Assist" which has been rolled out to 57 Avis rental car locations across the U.S. Callaway says Avis expects take rates of 10-20%, which means thousands of people who have never used navigation before will in the next few years. Add to that all of the Nextel customers who sign up for the recently launched \$10/month Viamoto service, and it becomes clear that by the time built-in nav systems prices reach "avalanche" levels, a sizable number of people will have been getting nav by phone for years. Which may only serve to enhance the penetration of built-in systems as people realize they like having navigation, but want more features than they can get on a tiny phone display.

[ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

By Kermit Whitfield, Senior Associate Editor

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